



May 26, 2009

Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Attn: Ms. Mary Adams
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
fax: (805) 543-0397

Subject: Comments for the 2008 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Segments

Ms. Adams:

The Lompico Watershed Conservancy has a continuing interest in the CWA sec.303(d) impairment designations that your agency prepares. Our work in this regard is limited to Santa Cruz County. Lompico Creek was one of the first three such listings in our area (the San Lorenzo River watershed). Impacts from water pollution are a major issue for us and are directly connected to our advocacy in the area of salmonid conservation. We have commented extensively on the Timber Waiver Program, another matter that is now under consideration. We have also collected turbidity data and observed and photographed the behavior of our streams in response to winter storms over many years.

We support the new listings with the exception that the actual listed sources of pollution are often vague and nonspecific as described, and can continue to remain so for years. Sediment/Siltation and Turbidity are examples of such impairments. An associated matter involves toxics that in some cases become a new listing when an individual pesticide is identified. This "new" listing should not re-set the clock from the "toxicity" listing date on the subsequent TMDL implementation. There is a risk to individually specifying chemicals such as pesticides. A chemical may be discontinued or replaced with another new chemical for which there is little to no toxicity information and no information independent of the industry that produced it. A more general toxicity determination is probably more consistent with the goal of correcting the toxicity problem.

In regard to the "Sediment/Siltation" and "Turbidity" impairments; the Conservancy has considered these problems for many years and we see no apparent improvement. Zayante Creek is still full of sediment and turbid for several days after a rainstorm. This condition can last as long as a week. All the streams we regularly monitor in the San Lorenzo watershed respond in a similar way. The Bean Creek (a tributary to Zayante) listing includes these actions as possible sources: "Disturbed Sites (Land Develop.), Erosion/Siltation, Nonpoint Source, Resource Extraction, Road Construction". Silviculture is not listed though it occurs in this watershed (and in Lompico). Is the new "name" for this Resource Extraction? Does Resource Extraction include sand mining? These questions are not semantic. This list is supposedly a blueprint for correcting pollution problems.

The Lompico Creek listing includes a new addition of fecal coliform which is of unknown source. This listing may have originated with the testing that the Lompico County Water District was required to do. This listing may or may not be connected to the nutrient and pathogen listings from 1994. By this time,

that is 14 years later, this question should not be so obscure. Additionally, the question arises as to what is being done to correct a problem from septic systems that is shown in the Lompico listing. We have not seen any actions in regard to septic system testing or enforcement. This water quality process should be showing some categorical improvement, and if it does not, then the reason for a lack of progress should be discussed. In the summer of 2008 an intense algae bloom occurred in this creek. This bloom created mats of filament algae on a scale that we had never seen before. This is a new indication of increased nutrient pollution. We contacted the appropriate County department and they directed us to the ongoing monitoring they conduct.

The Lompico Creek sediment impairment does not list silvaculture despite the fact that commercial logging occurs in this watershed. This specific listing is not under review at this time however we are taking this opportunity to point out this inconsistency.

We see decline rather than improvement when we consider the water pollution problems around us. The first Santa Cruz County listings were in 1990. Eighteen years should be enough time to demonstrate unequivocal improvement, or if it is obvious that no improvement has occurred, then that question of why, deserves an answer. These questions are not simple but they should be fundamental to this process.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Collins", with a stylized, cursive script.

Kevin Collins